

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 16-05-2006		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Standing Joint Force Headquarters - North: Improving the Federal Response to National Disaster Response Operations				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Timothy R. Morris Paper Advisor (if Any):				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT Recent disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina and 9-11, have highlighted an increasing need for the U.S. Government (USG) to deliver a more rapid and coordinated response to both natural disasters and classic military response scenarios. Katrina highlighted deficiencies at the national, state and local levels in planning for and executing relief operations. The aftermath of Katrina demonstrated that, within the USG, the DOD possesses unique capabilities to plan for and command and control operations of the magnitude of Katrina. While Federal agencies, such as DHS, are working to improve their responsiveness and develop capabilities to lead these operations in the future, USNORTHCOM has a command element that can provide near term capabilities for the USG. This paper recommends that Standing Joint Force Headquarters - North (SJFHQ-N) be utilized to lead planning and training with federal, state, and local agencies to identify and resolve Command and Control (C2) issues that impact mission accomplishment during National Disaster Response Operations. The recommendation provide the USG with a near term capability to solve a major operational deficiency and simultaneously could facilitate excellent planning and training for USNORTHCOM to prepare for its role in Homeland Defense, particularly response to a major terrorist attack requiring a massive USG response.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS SJFHQ-N, NORTHCOM, Hurricane Katrina, National Disaster Response, Homeland Defense, Homeland Security, Command and Control, Training, Interagency					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 24	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**STANDING JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS – NORTH:
IMPROVING THE FEDERAL RESPONSE TO NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE
OPERATIONS**

by

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Lt Col, USAF

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: _____

16 May 2006

Abstract

Standing Joint Force Headquarters-North: Improving the Federal Response to U.S. Disaster Response Operations

Recent disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina and 9-11, have highlighted an increasing need for the U.S. Government (USG) to deliver a more rapid and coordinated response to both natural disasters and classic military response scenarios. Katrina highlighted deficiencies at the national, state and local levels in planning for and executing relief operations. The aftermath of Katrina demonstrated that, within the USG, the DOD possesses unique capabilities to plan for and command and control operations of the magnitude of Katrina. While Federal agencies, such as DHS, are working to improve their responsiveness and develop capabilities to lead these operations in the future, USNORTHCOM has a command element that can provide near term capabilities for the USG. This paper recommends that Standing Joint Force Headquarters – North (SJFHQ-N) be utilized to lead planning and training with federal, state, and local agencies to identify and resolve Command and Control (C2) issues that impact mission accomplishment during National Disaster Response Operations. The recommendation provides the USG with a near term capability to solve a major operational deficiency and simultaneously could facilitate excellent planning and training for USNORTHCOM to prepare for its role in Homeland Defense, particularly response to a major terrorist attack requiring a massive USG response.

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INTRODUCTION

“We must build and maintain our defenses beyond challenge. Our military’s highest priority is to defend the United States . . . The threats and enemies we must confront have changed, and so must our forces.”

--The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002¹

Recent disasters in the Continental United States (CONUS) have highlighted an increasing need for a more rapid and coordinated response to both natural disasters and classic military response scenarios. Hurricane Katrina highlighted deficiencies, at the national, state and local levels, in planning for and executing relief operations. Reaction and response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 (9-11), also highlighted inadequacies in command structures, responsibilities, and authorities.

The ability of our large metropolitan areas to handle the necessary response to a natural disaster like Katrina or a potential terrorist attack, like 9-11, is limited at best. The response to major operations of this nature requires extensive coordination and cooperation between national, state and local agencies. The response to these scenarios must be highly integrated to be effective. In the chaos of a disaster, the necessary relationships, communications, and command structure will be difficult to establish.

In response to the challenges of Katrina and 9-11, the federal government has increasingly placed greater responsibility on USNORTHCOM to assist with disaster response. Certainly the military possesses some unique capabilities which can be useful in response to disaster operations. Further, the military can provide some unique command and control (C2) capabilities that can handle operations of such magnitude as 9-11 and Katrina that require a highly integrated national, state and local response.

If the military, particularly USNORTHCOM, is going to be looked to provide leadership and C2 in these situations, then the appropriate command responsibilities and authorities should be defined and implemented in statute. Further, with the extensive interagency participation, at the federal, state, and local levels and in concert with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), extensive planning and training is imperative to respond to these large-scale recovery operations.

The paper recommends that USNORTHCOM, via their Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ-N), must conduct extensive training exercises with applicable federal, state, and local agencies to identify and resolve C2 issues that impact mission accomplishment during National Disaster Response Operations.

This paper will utilize lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina as the basis of illustration for the issues that stem from large disaster relief operations which exceed the capabilities of state and local agencies. Katrina provides a good illustrative example to examine changes made to date and to develop further recommendations to prepare for the U.S. Government's (USG) role in the response to future large scale natural disasters where DOD may play a supporting role or even a terrorist attack where DOD may be directed to take a lead role.

This paper will not provide an exhaustive discussion of issues associated with Katrina response or propose a series of recommendations to solve the multitude of issues that have been identified in the after-action reports. Rather, this paper will focus on the Command and Control (C2) of the response effort at the Federal level. This paper will examine the C2 issues and offer recommendations for future operations, with a particular focus on the DOD's participation, whether it be homeland defense or civil support operations.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

“This government will learn the lessons of Hurricane Katrina. We are going to review every action and make necessary changes so that we are better prepared for any challenge of nature, or act of evil men, that could threaten our people.”

--President George W. Bush, 15 September, 2005²

Hurricane Katrina highlighted many limitations in the abilities of local, state, and federal agencies to respond to a large natural disaster. One of the most glaring limitations identified is the ability to quickly organize a vast recovery operation with little time for planning or coordination across a very diverse and loosely coupled grouping of governmental and other agencies attempting to bring relief to a chaotic situation. Further complicating rapid organization is the fact that, as in the case of Katrina, much of the local infrastructure was damaged or destroyed, creating unique challenges on top of a difficult task.

In the post-Katrina examination of the federal government response, President Bush commissioned a study to garner the lessons learned from Katrina and to present recommendations for changes to the federal government to be better prepared to respond to future natural disasters. In the report, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, it was noted that “Hurricane Katrina severely stressed our current national response capabilities.”³ In spite of the fact that Katrina overwhelmed our national response capabilities, Katrina was fairly minor. There are significantly more daunting National Planning Scenarios than Katrina, including: “an act of nuclear terrorism, an outbreak of pandemic influenza, and a 7.5 magnitude earthquake striking a major city.”⁴ The number of deaths and economic toll resulting from a nuclear detonation or pandemic outbreak would be considerably more challenging than Hurricane Katrina. The Katrina report notes that “until

we can meet the standard set by the most demanding scenarios, we should not consider ourselves adequately prepared.”⁵

Command and Control. One of the most significant issues for the Federal government in responding to Katrina was the integration of the numerous federal, state and local government agencies that were responding to the disaster. In addition to the government response, there were also significant relief activities conducted by NGOs that were not well integrated or synchronized. Looking strictly at the national response, the federal government was unable to effectively integrate even the agencies of the federal government.

As noted in the Katrina Report:

Our current system for homeland security does not provide the necessary framework to manage the challenges posed by 21st Century catastrophic threat . . . During the Federal response to Katrina, four critical flaws in our national preparedness became evident: Our processes for unified management of the national response; command and control structures within the Federal government; knowledge of our preparedness plans; and regional planning and coordination.⁶

The DOD received much credit in the aftermath of Katrina. Along with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the DOD was credited with being “only one of the federal departments that possessed real operational capabilities to translate Presidential decisions into prompt, effective action on the ground.”⁷ Much of the DOD and USCG success stemmed from their existing C2 structures, planning, and training that was capitalized on to make their response more effective than other agencies.

While the DOD and USCG have been commended for their responsiveness and preparation, other federal agencies, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in particular, have received much of the blame for the failure to lead a coordinated National

Response. While DHS was the lead for this operation, it was apparent that “command centers in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and elsewhere in the Federal government had unclear, and often overlapping, roles and responsibilities that were exposed as flawed during this disaster”.⁸

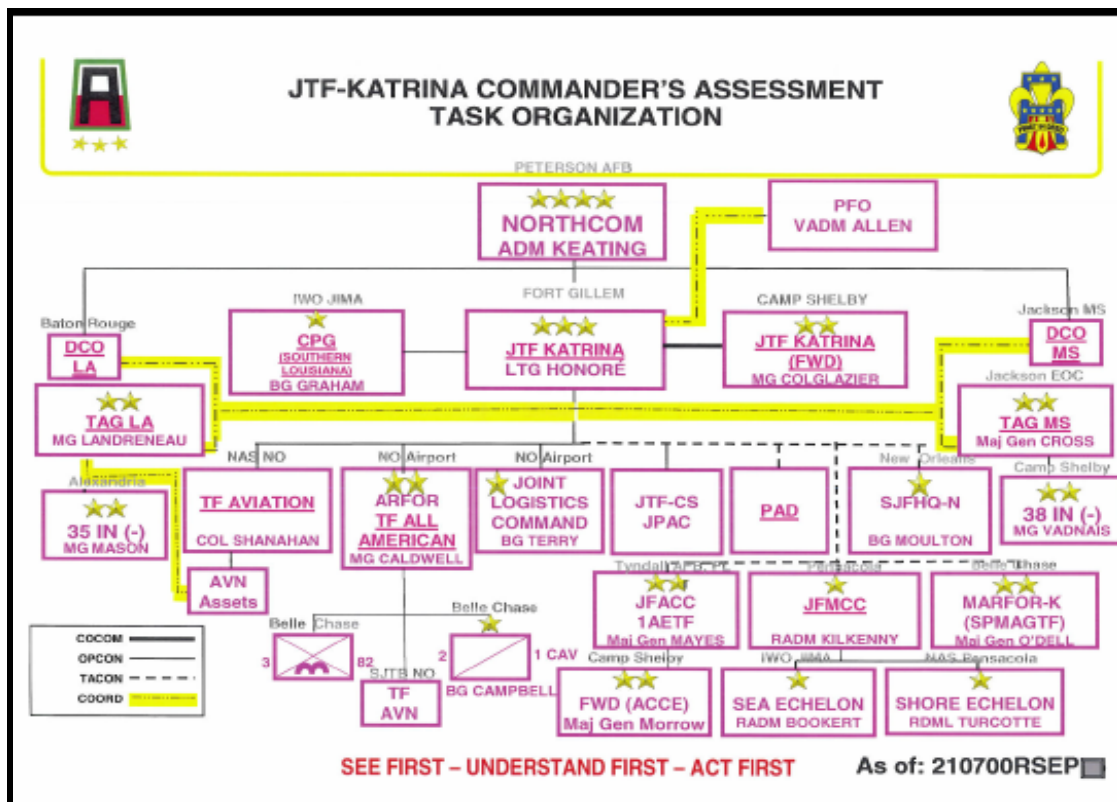


Figure 1 JTF Katrina Command and Control Structure
(Source: JCOA Brief to JFCOM CCM, 22 Sep 05)⁹

JTF-Katrina C2. Figure 1 provides a graphic depiction of the C2 structure for the DOD Katrina Response Operations. USNORTHCOM, in a supporting role to DHS, provided the overall DOD leadership to the response effort via a specially appointed and implemented Joint Task Force (JTF-Katrina) under the leadership of LTG Honore. The JTF-Katrina C2 organization structure provides visibility into the numerous DOD command elements that played a part in the relief operations. While some of the elements were under the direct

control of USNORTHCOM and JTF-Katrina, a large portion of the DOD elements were not under direct USNORTHCOM command and were merely coordinating their efforts with the leadership of JTF-Katrina.

While the DOD response was better integrated and synchronized than some of the other federal agencies, the DOD response was not without issues. The Katrina Report highlighted that:

Separate command structures for active duty military and the National Guard hindered their unity of effort . . . for the first two days of Katrina response operations, USNORTHCOM did not have situational awareness of what forces the National Guard had on the ground. Joint Task Force Katrina (JTF-Katrina) simply could not operate at full efficiency when it lacked visibility of over half the military forces in the disaster area.¹⁰

Accordingly, the Katrina report recommended a more unified command structure which would better integrate National Guard and Federal forces. At issue was the fact that, “the Commanding General of JTF-Katrina and the Adjutant Generals (TAGs) of Louisiana and Mississippi had only a coordinating relationship, with no formal command relationship established. This resulted in confusion over roles and responsibilities . . .”¹¹

In spite of some of the key lessons learned for the DOD in the aftermath of Katrina, some have argued that the DOD must do more in disaster relief operations. Some have recommended that the DOD take the lead role in future disaster relief operations. Proponents of this approach highlight the unique capabilities of the military that could provide effective support of the relief operations. Additionally, the C2 capabilities of the DOD provide rapidly deployable command capabilities to lead disaster operations.

While there is some merit to the argument that the DOD possesses unique capabilities that are useful in disaster response, the DOD should ultimately remain in a supporting role to DHS in these types of activities. And as noted in the recommendations of the Katrina report,

the DHS capabilities should be improved to allow that department to meet the challenges imposed by a natural disaster similar to Katrina. “DOD, first and foremost, has its critical overseas mission, the solution to improving the Federal response to future catastrophes cannot simply be ‘*let the Department of Defense do it.*’ Yet DOD capabilities must be better identified and integrated into the Nation’s response plans.”¹² Inherent in this finding is a problem within the Federal government that there is not a wide understanding of the capabilities the DOD can bring to natural disaster response. It further highlights the fact that DOD will continue to be expected to play a significant role in future operations.

Planning/Training. Another key problem area identified during the Katrina response was in the area of planning. “The Federal government should work with its homeland security partners in revising existing plans, ensuring a functional operational structure—including within regions— and establishing a clear, accountable process for all National preparedness efforts.”¹³

A lack of planning capability and training at all governmental levels was insufficient to handle the immense issues presented by Katrina. At the federal level, the lack of planning for interagency operations exposed numerous seams and gaps. The Katrina review recommended, “the Departments of Homeland Security and Defense should jointly plan for the Department of Defense’s support of Federal response activities as well as those extraordinary circumstances when it is appropriate for the Department of Defense to lead the Federal response.”¹⁴

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense (ASD(HD)), Paul McHale noted that “we do recognize that what we did in the aftermath of Katrina reflected the urgency of the mission requirement, not the detail of our prior planning.”¹⁵

Significant work must be done to improve the planning capabilities within the various federal agencies. Even more challenging will be improving the USG's ability to integrate those planning activities across all the diverse federal agencies. The Center for Strategic and International Studies noted, "Department of Defense has the most robust strategic planning process in government, the study team recommends leveraging that expertise to assist the NSC and DHS in developing a concept of operations and associated requirements."¹⁶ While DOD has significant planning capability, it continues to work to better integrate with other USG agencies, as well as state and local participants. Yet the DOD has the capability to assist the other USG agencies in improving their planning capabilities.

USNORTHCOM Capabilities. USNORTHCOM is responsible for "planning, organizing, and executing homeland defense and civil support missions within the continental United States, Alaska, and territorial waters."¹⁷ USNORTHCOM, as the lead combatant command responsible for Homeland Defense, implemented changes in response to 9-11 and Katrina. One of the key areas was the establishment of two command elements responsible to prepare for and respond to future challenges, namely Joint Task Force Civil Support (JTF-CS) and Standing Joint Force Headquarters – North (SJFHQ-N).

JTF-CS was established in the wake of 9-11 to better integrate DOD and civil capabilities in the event of a domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) attack on a major metropolitan area. The USNORTHCOM website details JTF-CS mission as follows:

JTF-CS plans and integrates DOD support to the designated Primary Agency (PA) for domestic (CBRNE) consequence management operations. When approved by the secretary of defense and directed by the commander of USNORTHCOM, JTF-CS deploys to the incident site and executes timely and effective command and control of designated DOD forces, providing support

to civil authorities to save lives, prevent injury and provide temporary critical life support.¹⁸

JTF-CS has been very active in working closely with state and local first responders, in addition to other federal agencies, to plan and train for a major CBRNE scenario.

Recently, JTF-CS hosted part of the DOD Interoperability Communications Exercise (DICE).¹⁹ The exercise was designed “to allow personnel from DOD and (DHS) and civilian first responder teams to test and integrate communications systems that would be used in the event of a CBRNE attack.”²⁰ JTF-CS was also utilized in support of Katrina operations as depicted in Figure 1. Headquartered at Fort Monroe, VA, JTF-CS provided civil support capabilities to the JTF-Katrina Commander.

Standing Joint Force Headquarters – North (SJFHQ-N) was also stood up in the aftermath of 9-11, as well as SJFHQ at each of the Combatant Commands (COCOMs) with the exception of USCENTCOM. The SJFHQ concept was directed by the Defense Planning Guidance, May 2002, which required each regional COCOM to “establish SJF HQs by FY2005 reflecting standards established by Joint Forces Command and incorporating lessons learned from Millennium Challenge ’02.”²¹

SJFHQ-N stood up operationally in January 2004 and their mission is to “maintain situational awareness of the USNORTHCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) . . . to enable rapid transition to a contingency response posture.”²² Upon receiving direction, SJFHQ-N “rapidly deploys a joint C2 element to support homeland defense and civil support operations . . . reducing the ‘ad hoc’ nature of traditional JTF headquarters.”²³

SJFHQ-N deployed in support of Hurricane Katrina operations. As evidenced on the JTF-Katrina C2 structure (Figure 1), SJFHQ-N deployed from Peterson AFB, CO to New Orleans under the command of BG Moulton. SJFHQ-N reported to JTF-Katrina which was

headquartered at Fort Gillem, GA. Of note, the intent of the SJFHQ, as documented in their mission and noted in the preceding paragraph, is to rapidly deploy to provide C2 and reduce the ad hoc nature of standing up a new JTF. Interestingly, SJFHQ-N deployed to New Orleans, but was not the initial elements of the JTF tasked to lead the USNORTHCOM response. This responsibility was placed in a new JTF stood up at Fort Gillem.

While having SJFHQ-N “on scene” in New Orleans certainly provided JTF-Katrina better situational awareness of the situation, which was critical to quickly assessing the needs of the response effort, utilizing the SJFHQ-N as a forward element likely did not contribute to the expedient stand up of JTF-Katrina as designed. Admittedly, having SJFHQ-N in New Orleans allowed forward C2 of the DOD forces in the recovery area when critical infrastructure, particularly communications, was badly damaged. However, it remains of note that this element was not the initial C2 element for JTF-Katrina. This observation will be discussed further in the recommendations. Also of note is the fact that this issue was not identified or discussed in the Katrina Report.

Many of the issues highlighted in preceding section, and noted in the Katrina Report, focus on more long-term solutions to fix organizational issues and retool the burgeoning DHS. The USG can ill afford to wait for many of these issues to be implemented, refined, and tested before the next major disaster relief operation is upon us. Therefore, the DOD has a unique opportunity to utilize some of its core capabilities to provide a near-term solution set for their civil support mission which also serve to provide the DOD with practical training for their primary Homeland Defense role.

RECOMMENDATIONS

“In everything we do—planning, exercising, conducting real-world operations—we continuously hone our ability to support civil authorities in responding to national disasters, while never losing focus on our primary mission—homeland defense. Our enemies should make no mistake about our resolve or our capabilities.”

--Admiral Timothy J. Keating, Commander USNORTHCOM, 15 March 2006²⁴

One of the most significant and clear lessons from the Federal government's response to Katrina is that the USG was not prepared to respond with the full force of all her agencies operating in close coordination and synergy. This lesson demands that the Federal government must take action to do better in future disaster response scenarios.

While there has been considerable work done to identify the problems and, to some extent, the recommendations of what should be done, the path ahead and the solution set are still rather unclear. With an omnipresent threat of another 9-11 attack or the impending threat of the coming Hurricane season, the time for the USG to implement change is now. The public will expect no less.

In the near-term, the DOD is the only Federal government agency that has the inherent capabilities to plan, organize, and control relief operations of the magnitude of Hurricane Katrina or larger disaster operations. One could argue that DOD should not be the lead agency for responding to disasters of this magnitude. And much discussion has centered on ensuring that the appropriate agencies be charged with the responsibility to lead these efforts. Predominantly the Department of Homeland Security will be in the lead role. However, with DHS still in its formative years, there is much work to be done before the DHS is fully capable of taking the lead in these types of operations.

USNORTHCOM has the inherent ability to provide a near term solution to the USG's C2 difficulties in responding to major disaster operations. SJFHQ-N provides a C2 element that can fill this void until the USG can build these capabilities into the DHS as envisioned. SJFHQ-N should take the lead and train with applicable federal, state and local agencies to identify and resolve C2 issues that impact mission accomplishment during National Disaster Response Operations.

This recommendation does not suggest that DOD must be assigned the Lead Federal Agency (LFA) for all disaster response operations. However, it does recognize that fact that the DOD currently has inherent capabilities and those should be utilized, in the near term, to provide immediate capabilities to the President, if requested, and help to facilitate the growth of DHS capabilities to lead these operations with DOD in a supporting role.

As noted on the USNORTHCOM website:

In providing civil support, USNORTHCOM generally operates through established Joint Task Forces subordinate to the command. An emergency must exceed the capabilities of local, state and federal agencies before USNORTHCOM becomes involved. In most cases, support will be limited, localized and specific. When the scope of the disaster is reduced to the point that the Primary Agency can again assume full control and management without military assistance, USNORTHCOM will exit, leaving the on-scene experts to finish the job.²⁵

SJFHQ-N primary mission is to prepare for this type operation and provide rapidly deployable C2 capability. SJFHQ-N could be assigned lead responsibility, in the near-term, to plan, organize, and train for a disaster recovery operation of Katrina proportions. This planning would provide the foundations for developing the DOD C2 relationships and the requisite relationships to support an integrated and synchronized interagency response. As SJFHQ-N matures the planning process, integration with state and local agencies could be

improved. Further, the planning would facilitate the opportunity to train to specific scenarios that would enable gaps and seams to be identified and rectified.

Some would argue that this is not the mission of the DOD. In fact, DHS is the lead federal agency and should develop the capabilities to handle these scenarios. DOD is stretched thin with on-going operations overseas, and should remain a supporting role in civil support activities. Further, many would argue that DOD should never be put in a lead role in domestic response scenarios for fear of “deploying” U.S. troops domestically.

While these arguments have some merit, the first strategic objective of the DOD, according to the National Military Strategy, is to protect the United States.²⁶ Therefore, the DOD should utilize all capabilities at its disposal to support the Federal response to disasters. Whether it be in a supporting or supported role is irrelevant. However, due to the identified limitations of the other Federal agencies in the near term, the DOD could provide some near-term operation capability to facilitate improved USG responsiveness.

As noted by the Paul McHale, ASD(HD):

Very few analysts would suggest that DOD should play the lead role in responding to major disasters of the magnitude we experience each year on a recurring basis . . . What will be subject to ongoing examination is the question of whether DOD should play a more substantial role and perhaps a leadership role in responding to the much more rarer, much more substantial occurrence of a catastrophic event—not simply a hurricane, but a hurricane of the magnitude of Katrina. Not simply a terrorist attack, but a terrorist attack employing weapons of mass destruction where the devastation might cover large areas . . . But in light of the hard realities that we confronted following Katrina, it is reasonable to reexamine and perhaps redefine DOD’s role in response to a truly catastrophic event.²⁷

National Operations Centers. The Katrina Report recommended that “National Operations Center (be established) to coordinate the National response and provide

situational awareness and a common operating picture for the entire Federal government.”²⁸

This recommendation called for the DHS to establish NOCs to facilitate future recovery operations. While this should remain the long-term solution, SJFHQ-N is currently responsible for maintaining situational awareness and a common operating picture for the USNORTHCOM AOR and could be rapidly expanded to fulfill that role for the Federal response to near-term operations.

The objective is clear. The agencies of the Federal government must be able to operate in an efficient, integrated fashion. DOD Joint Publication 3-08 states, “Whether supported or supporting, close coordination between the military and other non-DOD agencies is a key to successful interagency coordination.”²⁹

Another counterargument to this thesis stems from the unique nature of command and control in the DOD. Admittedly, C2 in the DOD is somewhat unique to C2 in other Federal agencies.

Military operations depend upon a command structure that is often very different from that of civilian organizations. These differences may present significant challenges to coordination efforts. The various USG agencies’ different, and sometime conflicting, goals, policies, procedures, and decision-making techniques make unity of effort a challenge.³⁰

However, these differences only highlight the need for more interaction and planning prior to future disaster relief operations. It is critical that the Federal government rapidly institute improvements that will facilitate more effective disaster recovery operations. Utilizing the existing capabilities of USNORTHCOM’s SJFHQ-N provides a near-term solution.

In addition to providing near-term capability for the USG, this recommendation also provides a unique opportunity for USNORTHCOM to expand and test its Homeland Defense

capabilities. Hurricane Katrina provided a benchmark for the difficulties in integrating agencies, at all levels of government, to respond to a natural disaster. Katrina response was not unlike the level of complexity and integration that would be required for Homeland Defense response for a CBRNE contingency in a major U.S. city. The prime difference is that USNORTHCOM could be the LFA.

Given the similarities of these scenarios in terms of the agencies that would be involved and the complexity of the integration and synchronization, utilizing SJFHQ-N in a lead planning and training role, could provide USNORTHCOM with valuable lessons learned. In addition to identifying seams and gaps in C2 structure, these scenarios would help to develop the key relationships, interagency and with NGOs, that can facilitate a much more efficient and effective response to either Homeland Defense or Civil Support to Homeland Security missions. As noted in the *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols* report, “by planning together, training together, and operating together, the U.S. agencies involved in national security could for the first time bring to bear coherent capabilities far greater than the sum of their parts.”³¹

Another direct criticism of having SJFHQ-N take a more direct role in disaster relief concerns resources. Some would contend that USNORTHCOM is not manned or resourced for the additional burden of the proposed expansion of SJFHQ-N’s role. To meet the demands of this proposal, USNORTHCOM would have to be allocated additional personnel to assign to the SJFHQ or would have to reassign personnel from within the command that are currently providing other functions. Further, it could be argued that additional equipment would be required to expand the role of the SJFHQ.

While these concerns are valid, they are not insurmountable problems. The USG is investing substantial resources to ensure that the federal response to a Katrina-type disaster is improved. Additional materiel and personnel resources could be made available to USNORTHCOM as they would likely be required to meet the increased role of SJFHQ-N.

Moreover, it should be noted that USNORTHCOM has already taken numerous steps to ensure that the lessons of Katrina are being applied to prepare for future civil support operations. Admiral Timothy J. Keating, Commander USNORTHCOM, in testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee stated the most important lessons from Katrina “pertained to unity of effort and unity of command and communication.”³² In February 2006, USNORTHCOM hosted a hurricane preparation conference in Colorado Springs. This conference gave “adjutants generals from the Gulf Coast states and NORTHCOM senior leadership the opportunity to discuss mutual efforts to prepare for the 2006 hurricane season.”³³ Additionally, USNORTHCOM “made significant progress in 2005 in developing its homeland defense and civil support plans . . . USNORTHCOM conducts at least five large-scale and 30 smaller exercises each year to test these plans . . .”³⁴ These exercises could be tailored to fit a broader exercise of the federal response and would still provide USNORTHCOM and the USG an excellent opportunity to refine plans and test the federal response capabilities.

Integrating SJFHQ-N as the lead element to prepare for and train for disaster operations provides USNORTHCOM, DOD, and USG the best near-term solution to ensure better interagency, as well as state and local, integration and synchronization of effort for the coming hurricane season and any potential disaster recovery operations, as well as homeland defense missions.

CONCLUSIONS

“Some believe that, with the U.S. in the midst of a dangerous war on terrorism, now is not the time to transform our armed forces. I believe that quite the opposite is true. Now is precisely the time to make changes.”

-- Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, 31 January, 2002³⁵

This paper presents a recommendation for USNORTHCOM regarding the use of SJFHQ-N in preparation for and execution of future disaster recovery operations. Specifically, SJFHQ-N must conduct extensive training exercises with applicable federal, state, and local agencies to identify and resolve C2 issues that impact mission accomplishment during National Disaster Response Operations.

The recommendation provides the USG a near-term capability to begin to address some of the deficiencies identified in the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina. In particular, SJFHQ-N could provide the initial, rapidly deployable, C2 capabilities that could be utilized to quickly standup the Federal operations in response to future national disasters. More importantly, SJFHQ-N could provide an excellent mechanism to facilitate the near-term planning and training necessary to identify and resolve gaps and seams in the C2 structure of the various Federal agencies that should and must integrate to provide efficient and effective National Disaster Response Operations.

In addition to providing the Federal government with a near term solution to the C2 issues, this recommendation would also allow USNORTHCOM to prepare and exercise to fulfill both its Homeland Defense and Civil Support to Homeland Security roles. The near-term planning and training to meet this recommendation would stress the capabilities of the Federal agencies to develop the necessary relationships and agreements to facilitate a highly integrated and synchronized response operation. This planning and training is essential in the

near-term to prepare for likely natural disasters, of the magnitude of Katrina, or a terrorist attack of sufficient scale as to require a national response.

The added benefit of conducting this planning and training will be to attempt to avoid the inevitable challenges that were evident in the Katrina response. In the chaos of a disaster, the necessary relationships, communications, and command structure are difficult to establish. USNORTHCOM has taken numerous steps to improve the DOD response to CONUS-based recovery operations. The establishment of SJFHQ-N and JTF-CS are two examples of positive steps to prepare for this critical responsibility.

With the implementation of this recommendation, USNORTHCOM will be better postured to assist in delivering a more efficient and effective USG response to national disaster recovery operations. Additionally, this will provide a framework and lay the foundation for more long term solutions which will include the maturation of, and transition to, the planning and C2 capabilities of the DHS. Further, it will facilitate future integration of expanded interagency participation, at the federal, state, and local levels and in concert with Non-Governmental Organizations, to provide the large-scale recovery operations the public expects from the USG.

NOTES

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- ¹ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, pg 29
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